HARRY &
AT ANY
TIME

Biography of Jerome E. Kroll

I was born 5-3-42 at St. Joseph Hospital in Milwaukee, Wisconsin at 9:00 p.m. premature. My mother was Hazel Buske who was 20 years old and my father was Harry Kroll who was 23 years old and worked at Sturdy Built Equipment. My mother had one child before I was born who was born dead.

I was Baptist on 7-04-42 and had John Kroll and Marie Konziora as godparents. As of 2002 Uncle John was 87 years old and is living in a nursing home and now has dementia and his arthritis gets pretty bad at times.

My parents lived on the second floor at a home at 2169 South 69 Th Street West Allis, Wisconsin from 1942 to 1951 or 9 years. The kitchen window faced west and had a poor view because of a large elm tree that grew in back of the house. The tree had several squirrel nests and sometimes I fed the squirrel nuts especially acorn nuts.

The windows in the south of the living room was blocked by another house so there really was no view. In the flat there was no view from the north. The view from the east was part of 69 Th Street. In the flat their were two bed rooms toward the south. My brother who was one year younger and myself slept in bunk beds. Sundays were special because my father brought the Milwaukee Journal Sunday paper home plus he would bring jelly doughnuts and rolls.

Physicians at this time made house calls and I remember laying on the kitchen table while being examine by the doctor. Apparently I got many sore throats and thus it was decided to give me a tonsillectomy. I remember being rolled down a hall to the operating room.

I found a cat and convince my mother to allow him to stay in the house but once while opening the refrigerator door I closed the door by mistake on to his tail and part of his tail was cut off.

During the first four years of development a child go through language

development that is at 13 months, the first words are said, at 17 months have a 50 word vocabulary at 18 months have two words combinations at 24 months, at 37 months have a four words combination and at 40 months can say indirect requests. Thus a had a normal development.

Most of my early memories must be from age 5 through 9 years old. On one Christmas there was laid out a large Lionel train set out in the living room. The train had very large cars. It was a beautiful sight. During the war years (1942-1945) Mother placed orange electric candle light in the window. My father had enlisted in the Navy and was trained at the Great Lake Navy base, but he got out because he couldn't make some training.

Father made sofa pads I remember watching Father using a square board which had pins in which you string yarn across the pins. Before we had a refrigerator we had a ice box. I remember my mother placing out the ice sign in the window. A truck with blocks of ice would show up and bring a big block of ice into the house attached to a big hook.

Before we got our first TV, I use to listen to the Green Horney and Amos and Andy. When our little round screen TV came into the house my brother and I watched "Mama" and "Howdy Dowdy. I know I slept with my teddy bear every night until the arm of the bear was torn. When my mother threw him away I went to look at him in the trash bin in the alley.

My father already had a car and parked in a garage in the alley. My parents placed a swing set and I had a small personal garden between the garage and the lot line. In between the houses were planted lily of the valley and firecracker flowers. My parents had a close friendship between the landlord and his wife who was a painter. I know calling them aunt and uncle.

Mother had a photo album which showed me as a baby and some pictures of my brother Ronald and myself in an Indian costume and some pictures from Wisconsin Dells.

My brother and myself did play with cap toy guns which mad a loud noise if the hammer on the toy gun hit the cap just right.

Would walk with Mother to the streetcar station at W. Becher Street. This was the end of the line so the conductor would pull the seat back depending on which direction we were going. The shade in back of the conductor was in a triangle shape. The hard part was getting on the car since the step would fold down when the conductor stopped. I would try to go back to the rear conductor seat and you could see the tracks where the foot bell came from the floor.

There was a empty field at W. Becher where I would play and made forts. My Mother and us boys went to Grandma Buske once a week. At the corner of 69 St. was a red fire and police call box. I remember once getting on my three wheel bicycle and picking up the call box to see the hole where the key was used to call the fire department . The police cars were black and did not have radios in them so the police officer would have to call into the station using these boxes.

My brother and I played with three friends down the street whose name were Richard, Robert and Ronald. We used to go into the basement to drive their nice hot rod which pedal easily. They had a nice big yard with a big crab apple tree and in the fall we would throw the crab apple in a crab apple fight.

During a thunderstorm while running back home in the alley I got run over by a bicycle. Had to be taken to the hospital. Never did know who ran me over. Mother did wash in the basement and in warm weather the basement cellar doors would be opened so that the wash could be hung outside.

Mother read me stories and the best was "Bear rabbit". When I went to kinder garden school I remember crying and I remember using the large water paint brushes. In first and second grade I went to public school and remember being embarrassed by the teacher in regard to a spelling test. Mother said I broke the teachers gold fish bowl.

One night my parent were invited to the landlord flat for a card party. Later in the night after drinking bottle beer the landlord wife asked my mother which child did she love the best? Somehow this issue was pressed on and developed into a quarrel and this lead my parent decision to move. Thus a

few weeks later we were moving out the furniture and rolling up the carpet. It was exciting to move to a new location.

(1951 to 1952) 2513 West Townsend (Age 9 and 10)

We moved to 2513 West Townsend to a rear house in back of Uncle Ulrich"s mother and father home. This home was only a few blocks from A. O. Smith Corporation which made auto frames.

Uncle Ulrich worked at A.O. Smith and sometimes he would visit my mother during lunch time. My brother and I were enrolled in St. Leo about six blocks from our home but both my brother and I were placed one grade back because the sister superior (Notre Dame) said that public schools were one year behind public school. We got a dog a cocker spaniel which we walked everyday in back of the alley. At this time in 1951 and 1952 horses still pulled the garage wagons that picked up garbage from the large concrete boxes that were in back of each yard. I used to follow the wagon to pick up star shaped stamping.

My brother and I had a bedroom on the second floor and one Christmas I got a toy castle which had a draw bridge and lead soldiers. At this time I remember playing a lot with the toy soldiers. Always played all the soldiers and plastic cowboys and Indians in the big tin can. Apparently during play a lot of the toy soldiers lost their heads. Lead toys break easily.

While at St. Leo school made my first Holy Communion. It was a great event because we dressed up in white pants and white shirt and tie. I believe I also received gifts from other family members such as a prayer book and a rosary.

The home was near the Egyptian movie theater which was a very ornate movie theater. Had one friend who has hundreds of metal painted toy animals. At this time mother would begin baby siting in

her home to made extra money. Although I liked this rental home we didn't live in it very long because soon we moved to 1318 West 34th St.

(1952 -1954) 1318 West 34th St (age 11 and 12)

Aunt Ester and Uncle Russell's mother and father lived down stair. My brother and I were told we couldn't play in the back yard. There was a big apple tree in the yard. Went to St. Lawrence school along Greenfield Ave. I remember I enjoyed the winter when the mounts of snow would be piled up between the road and the sidewalk. I could walk on the high ridge that was made by the piles of snow.

While at St. Lawrence school was Confirmed on October 15, 1953 and Grandpa Robert Kroll was my sponsor and I was confirmed by the Most Rev. Albert G. Meyer. I liked going to St. Lawrence School because the Sisters of St. Francis taught there and their big Mother house was across the street. There was a very large bar picket fence around their property. Other students would call me teacher's pet because the sister that taught me always placed my drawings up on the board and I helped her after school collecting book materials or placing drawings up around the classroom.

One Easter I began collecting or buying glass ware from a glass shop along Greenfield Ave. I guess my mother must have been giving me the money.

Only a few houses down I had a boy friend who had a monopoly set and we use to play cards and play this monopoly game for hours. This friend also had a lot of comic books which I used to read. I believe I finally talked my mother in subscribing to Donald Duck comic book which I looked forward to receive. Aunt Eleanor gave

us boys a whole series of the Hardy Boy books. This was very enjoyable reading.

When ice skating during the winter at Greenfield park when I became cold there was a building with a wooden floor and benches that you used to change skates and warm up. Never achieved any speed going backwards. Like living here because could ride my bicycle to the viaduct and under the bridge their were a lot of pigeon and I used to collect feathers.

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2452 West Hadley (1954-1956 Milwaukee, Wisconsin) Jerome E. Kroll (Jerry) lived there between ages 12 to 14 years old.

During 1954 after many years of living in rental flats. Mother and Father (Harry and Hazel Kroll) bought a home at 2452 West Hadley. This house was siting on a corner lot, with a large front porch with a swing set. The house had a small back yard with a white picket fence.

The backdoor was near the sidewalk with a milk slide door on the north side of the house. One of the first projects that Mother did was to build a patio with Lime stone blocks. Mother did it all by herself using a sand base. Since the patio was on the north side of the house it was not used very much.

Mother loved flower gardening and one of her favor books was from Wayside gardens because of all the beautiful pictures. The next project she did was to get her sister Elaine to go to the nursery to buy two upright evergreen trees for planting in front of the front porch and she planted two low growing evergreen shrubs. These evergreens were her pride. In the back yard she planted several types of roses these were nursed in the winter with piles of dirt to prevent the stems from freezing.

A short privet shrub lined the sidewalk from the porch to the sidewalk along the street. Father always had the job of cutting the shrubs to keep them short.

Beside roses Mother loved irises, the deep purple color she liked. The flower garden bordered the west side and the south side next to the garden thus this part of the flower garden obtained the sun during the afternoon.

Father got his dog a pup beagle from a litter from Uncle Bob (father's brother). Uncle Bob had a kennel toward the back of his yard with several beagles in it. Father wanted a dog so he could go rabbit hunting during the

fall season. Father built a neat little box for the dog next to the kitchen heat register. Father's car was always a ford. The superb car was a yellow ford but within a couple of years the salt from the winter months eat a hole right through the fender. Upstairs was a small finished flat but did not have a bathroom. The bathroom was in the basement. Father tried to get a bathroom upstair, but the city inspectors would not allow it.

The upstairs flat was rented to Laura a single woman who invited my brother Ron and myself to play cards and other games. The basement had a cellar for storing can goods. Mother often canned watermelon pickles, tomatoes and applesauce. The watermelon pickles were really very tasty.

There in the cellar Father always stored cases of beer and my brother Ronald and myself were always treated to orange and root beer soda which were stored in wooden box cases.

Dad pride was a workbench that he made and was position on the south east corner of the basement. The work bench had a work vice that was always useful to use to cut wood or straighten some piece of metal that was bent. Father toolbox was stored under the bench. When my father bought me a bicycle which was a very heavy and durable bike which I used every morning to deliver the Sentinel the Milwaukee morning paper. Often times I had to use Father's tools like the wrenches and screwdriver often to change a tire or to adjust the chain on my bicycle.

There was a small box radio on the wall against the bench. When my parents first bought the house coal was used in the large furnace which had large heating vents going to registers throughout the house. Later the furnace was converted to gas heat. I remember how always the side door of the house was always unlocked so that the meter gas man could come into the house to read the meter. You knew the meter man was coming in when he would shout "Meter man" as he entered the door.

Mother always did wash on Mondays with an old wringer wash machine. When I helped Mother with the wash she would always say keep your fingers out of the rubber roller wringers. Mother would wash the white

clothes first and the colored clothes later. Than in the winter months the wet wash was hung by wooden cloth pins on wash lines hung throughout the basement. Wash hung in the basement would usually take until Tuesday to dry out. Wash for four people usually filled the complete basement. On Wednesdays was Mother ironing day and starch had to be used on the white shirts before ironing. There were always stocks with holes that mother would mend. She taught me how to roll up stocks into pairs and place them into the cedar draws. To get the winkles out of white shirts and white tee shirts she used a steam iron with stilled water bottle with a pump that expanded with a hand pump. Ironing was a all day job.
Mother had a sewing machine and she made some of her own dresses and she could follow a pattern. The sewing machine was on a table driven by her foot on a swing metal pad that she pushed up and down.

The main living area was the kitchen which faced east with two windows which had a view of a two story brick apartment building. Dad would always get upset if people from that apartment building would park on our side of the street. The kitchen had a pantry facing north which had no heat and thus was cold in the winter.

The pantry was a nice place to go because the cookies and mother's baked goods were stored in cover decorated cans. Mother was a good cook. During the Christmas season she baked many Christmas cookies. My favor were the cut out cookies with rich white frosting and sprinkled with green, red and gold sugar crystals. Mother used to make the round power sugar cookies which melted in your mouth.

Mother was good at making bread. Bread making is a long process because you must allow the dough to raise. Mother would place all the covered dough pans near the heat register to allow the dough to raise before baking. Since the loaves were not precut we could cut are own thick pieces of bread and spread it with rich margarine. The bread was very good and my grandparents (Buske) would enjoy getting bread from mother.

My brother Ron and myself loved American spaghetti. My father always wanted mashed potatoes and gravy so there was a routine on what we eat.

Fridays were fish day and the only fish I liked was fried bullheads. We never ran short of fish because once a week we went to Grandma and Grandpa Kroll house on lake Tichigan. And Father always went bass fishing taking the dog along. Mother took my brother Ron and I rowing down the river to the muddy marshes to fish with cane poles for bull heads. Bull heads fish are fun to fish for because they are heavy fish.

Mother used the pressure cooker to cook large pieces of meat. Father liked chop suey or green peppers filled with rice. I remember helping Mother cutting up pieces of meat and placing the meat on wooden sticks.

Both my Grandma (Buske) and Mother loved to make peanut squares with lots of white frosting and crushed peanuts and the others favorite was banana cake.

Dad and Mother bedroom faced north and my brother Ronald and I slept in the bedroom facing west in bunk beds. Each bedroom had one closet for clothes. Mother and Dad closet was completely full of clothes. One interesting picture on my mother and father's bedroom was a glass enclosed picture with a cross enclosed but what made the picture interesting was all the dry flowers in the picture and the various colors in the back ground.

The dining area a room not used often had a large glass chandelier hanging from the ceiling. Each piece of crystal glass was hung individually with the metal hook into holes in the six level chandelier. To the right side of the room was a small table which held the dial up telephone. The most calls received were from my Grandma (Buske) who called once each day to Mother.

To the window side of the room (east side) were many violets being grown by Mother along shelves hung from the window sills. The violets blossoms were purple, blue, white, single and double blossoms. In the middle of the dining room was a large oak table. Mother upholstery the chairs with a gold and green material. The back cabinets with glass doors had mother's favorite fine china which had flowers imprinted on the edges of the dishes.

Grandmother and Grandfather (Buske) were the most frequent visitors on Thanksgiving and New Years. I remember one picture I took of Grandma (Buske) siting next to the Christmas tree. The tree was lit up with various color lights and grandma was holding a gift. Grandma (Buske) always worn the same type of dress which was dark blue with white dots.

The living room had a very large mirror on the east wall which was framed in a large gold decorative frame. Green and gold ceiling to floor curtains hung from either side of the mirror. There were book cases full of books on metal black and gold book cases on either side of the mirrors. My mother belonged to several book clubs and she read a lot of fictions books. It is too bad that college educational opportunities were not available in Milwaukee in the fifties because I believe with all the reading that Mother did that college courses would have fulfilled her need to learn. Under the middle of the east wall was a 24 " television with the couch placed on the south side of the room and a cocktail table in front of the couch. Once my brother and myself had got into a fight and we fell over the cocktail table and broke the table leg. Since we were afraid of the belt whipping my father would have given us we glue the leg together and hoped that the table would stay together before my parent got home. If my mother figure out that the cocktail table was broken she never said anything about it.

The front door entrance had a large standup radio with a record (78") player. Mother had one large Christmas album set which was always played around Christmas time. Mother's favorite was Gershwin records. The records were stored in the radio cabinet. The standup radio was a nice piece of furniture. Also in the room was a table made by my Father when he was a young man. Originally father was a cabinet maker. Thus he was good at accurately measuring wood and cutting pieces, thus it is why he was a good machinist. The closet was full of winter clothes and Mother's hats and Father's crown hats which were worn on Sundays to go to St. Leo's church which was only one long block away.

On Wednesday or Thursday once a week Mother went to see her Mother and Father (Grand parent-Buske). In the beginning she took the streetcar that ran along 27 St. St, than the buses and sometimes she walked.

When we walked one block south which was Center St. There was a shoemaker who did repair to our shoes. The Center street trolley ran all the way to the park at Lake Michigan.

On weekends we went to Lake Tichigan to swim and fish for bull heads at my grandparent house on my Father side (Kroll family). The route was on a two lane highway and often my Father would be impatient about the traffic. Thus it would not be unusual for my father to try to try to pass 5 or 6 cars at a time often a dangerous situation.

My grand parent's house on lake Tichigan was not directly on the lake but in a small inlet which was full of lily pads. There was a cottage in the back of my grand parent house that was rented out.

St. Leo's church and school were one long block away. I attended St. Leo's grammar school during the sixth and seventh grade. The sisters which taught at the school were housed on the west side of the church that had a recreation room with windows all around the room. The yard was very small but they hung their wash on cloth lines in the yard. At St. Leo's all students went to mass before school. The church was very large with a huge picture of Christ the King painted inside the dome.

I always enjoyed Tuesday which was a day of adoration in which the Holy Eucharist was placed in a monstrance. The awesome, sight was that the lights that lit up on the huge angels had in their hands were beaming golden rays like grace shining from heaven. The theatrical effects were great. Rosaries were always handed out during mass in boxes with many different color rosaries. It was always interesting to me to find a crystal bead rosary instead of a black bead rosary. The greatest privilege was getting to hand out the rosaries. Each class had assigned seating and sometimes we get in the wrong pew and than the whole class would have to move back to the right pew assignments. I had a little prayer book which had prayers which were said to release souls out of purgatory and into heaven. Thus I was always saying these prayers during mass thinking that my prayers were releasing souls out of purgatory into heaven.

When we returned to class to get a chocolate milk and eat usually a peanut butter and jam sandwich. My mother allowed me to subscribe to a religious comic book that came out twice a month. It was always a treat to get the religious comic books. The playground was very small and because we lived so close to school we were allowed to go home for lunch. In seventh grade we were allowed to go to one wood working classes at a public school. I remember making a lamp with a pull chain attached to a handle.

At age 13 years old I obtained an early morning newspaper route delivering the Milwaukee sentinel. It was a good route because it was along 24 St. Between Burleigh and Center St.. Bungalow houses ran along the whole route thus often two papers were delivered to a single house. I had to get up about 5:30 A.M., get on my black heavy bicycle with black fenders and go to a garage just west of St. Leo Church on Locust to roll up about 60 papers. A stove was in the middle of the garage which we filled up with newspapers to get the garage warm in winter. There were benches along the walls so we could do the inserts to the paper and roll them up and place them in our canvas delivery bags. I believe I had to pay about $40.00 for the route and this was deducted off my route collections. I think I had to do collections every Friday and thus I made some tips.

The people on this route were good payers. In order to increase readership there were campaign drives conducted in which if we got a new customer we would get a prize. I was petty good and remember getting an encyclopedia, blankets, lantern etc for making my quota. Christmas was the best because when I delivered Christmas calendars I got a lot of tips which made me feel like a rich person.

Once when I was ready to deliver my paper route I walked outside and there on the sidewalk was my father laying on the ground and he was drunk.
After while I wanted a bigger route. This was a mistake because I had to go further to 20 St. and the area was poorer and the people did not pay as well nor did they tip well.
In sixth grade my Mother allowed me to join the boy scouts. The meetings were held in a nearby public school. I enjoyed all the camping equipment that had to be bought and immediately started to work for merit badges. I

remember going to one weekend camping trip where as soon as I got there their was a king of the hill game going on. Thus it seem like everyone was going up a big hill. Than it seem like everyone was coming back down the hill because someone got hurt and a lecture was given than that no one was to play that game again.

The scout master needed someone to play the bugle. I was given a silver bugle that was used in the Spanish American War. There was a boy named Murray who was suppose to teach me to play the bugle. I used to go to his house and he taught me two to three songs. One song played often was taps.

Using the money I made from the news route I was able to pay for a week at boy scout camp. At camp we live in a tent with a wooden floor. At camp I carved out a wood pecker and painted it the correct colors and attached it to a tree branch. Than I shellacked the entire bird and branch. Mother used it as a bookend. As I reviewed the merit badges that I could earn I decided that the church merit badge would be the easiest for me to earn.

Thus I began helping the church janitor clean and wax the church floors. The church janitor at St. Leo church also ran the bells at 6:00 p.m. on Saturday night. There were four ropes which went up four or five stories in the bell tower. The bells were so large that they could lift me off the ground. This was a great privilege to be able to ring the bells every Saturday night at 6:00 p.m.. At the same time I always like to lit a vigil light down in the basement church which had a grotto of Lourdes. I liked this grotto with the large statue of the Blessed Mother because it seemed everyone ignored the grotto, thus I could keep it clean and dust off the flowers.

Had a boy friend who lived on the southeast corner in an upstairs apartment named Dick. He had a nicer bicycle and we rode to Lake Michigan Lake Park. He was into muscle building and had weights in the large garage in back of the apartment complex. We wrestled around a lot. My brother Ronald seem to have his own set of friends.

On the bicycle route along Locust street there was one very steep hill to ride up. I always walked the hill because my bicycle was just to heavy to ride up

the hill. My bicycle did not have the three speeds that my friend Dick had on his newer bike.

Weekly the grass had to be cut and it was done by a hand lawnmower. Since we did not have a big yard the chore was not too difficult. Since there was large elm trees planted between the side walk and street the grass was very thin and did not grow fast.

My father Harry Kroll always went to work at Paper Machine Corporation. My mother always said that he was a good provider. He always went to work on time and was sick very few times. He assembled paper machines that made paper cups thus white rolls of heavy paper were folded and glued by the machine and than packed into card board boxes. Sometimes he would bring a roll a heavy white paper which I used do draw on. He later became the purchasing agent which had the benefits of a higher salary and more personal gifts. For some reason the extra pressure of purchasing agent made him nervous and in a few years mother and himself agreed that he needed to go back to his old job. I never known him to work at any other company except Paper Machine Corporation.

After work father always stopped at the local tavern. In Milwaukee their are about 1,000 local taverns which are a place of social gathering for many men. A glass of beer was about a nickel. My brother Ronald and I would eat about 5:00 p.m. or 5:30 p.m. and my father came home usually after 6:30 p.m. or 7:00 p.m. and expected my mother to have the food hot for him. My father expected mash potatoes and gravy everyday. Drinking by my father caused my mother a lot of problems. After my father eat he would go in the living room and fall asleep in his arm chair.

When relatives came over usually on my mother's family side they usually played cards. My mother's visitor was usually her sister and her mother (Grandma Buske).

My father was religious in that he had a certain prayer book and a picture of Jesus of the Shroud of Turin. I believe this picture kept his faith a live.